

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph on page 8 beginning at line 4 and ending at line 19, as follows:

The upper column member 140 is composed of a cylindrical column main body 23, and an upper bracket 240 fixed to the lower end of the column main body 23. A through hole 241 is punched to both sides of the upper bracket 240, respectively, and the tilt shaft 25 is embedded in the through hole 241. The core 25a of the tilt shaft 25 passes through the center 13b of the universal joint 13. A hole is also formed on both sides of the upper bracket 140, respectively. In this hole, a pin 26, on which a movable gear 320 (this will be described later) is pivoted, is embedded. In fact, this pin 26 is part of a tilt lock mechanism 160 which will be described later. As viewed in Fig. 8, a female screw 250, another component of the tilt lock mechanism 160, is formed on the rear side of the upper bracket 240. The entire upper column member 140 supports the rotation of the upper steering shaft 11 with the help of bearings 21 and 22, each being inserted between the top end of the column main body 23 and the upper steering shaft 11, and between the top end of the upper bracket 240 and the upper steering shaft 11. Further, the entire upper column member ~~[[15]]~~ 140 is supported by the tilt shaft 25 in such a manner to be able to pivot upon the lower column member 15.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 20 and ending on page 9, line 8, as follows:

The lower column member 15 is composed of a column main body 28 and a cylindrical portion 29 in one body. The cylindrical portion 29 includes a support portion 29a

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that supports the cylindrical portion 29 to be inserted in the upper bracket 240. To this end, the tilt shaft 25 is embedded in the support portion 29a. The column main body 28, on the other hand, is fixed to an instrument panel (not shown) of a vehicle through a mounting portion (not shown). The entire lower column member 15, through a bearing (not shown), supports the lower steering shaft 12 to make it pivotably move. Also, the upper column member 140 and the lower column member 15 are interconnected to each other by a spring 106. Because of this spring 106, a spring force is applied to the fore part ~~[[f]]~~ of the upper column member 140 against the lower column member 15, centering around the tilt shaft 25. This spring force is supposed to facilitate the adjustment of steering wheel's height by offsetting the weights of the upper steering shaft 11, the upper column member 140, and the steering wheel.

Please amend the paragraph on page 10 beginning at line 3 and ending at line 12, as follows:

The feed screw bar 330 is ~~locked to~~ engaged with the female screw 250, and its fore end is connected to the rear surface of the movable gear 320 and its rear end is connected to the operating member 340. For instance, if the operating member 340 is at the position as shown in Figs. 5 and 6, the feed screw bar 330 suppresses the movable gear 320, consequently being locked. On the other hand, if the operating member 340 is pulled up or shifted closer to the steering wheel, as illustrated in Figs. 7 and 8, a clearance or gap is created between the front end of the feed screw bar 330 and the rear surface of the movable gear 320. In this manner, the movable toothed portion 32a of the movable gear 320 is separated from the fixed toothed portion 31a, and the lock therebetween is released.

Please amend the paragraph on page 12 beginning at line 13 and ending at line 20, as follows:

Preferred Embodiment 2

In case of the Exemplary Embodiment 1, the fixed gear 31 was mounted on the lower column member 15, and the movable gear 320 was mounted on the upper column member 140. In the present embodiment, however, the movable gear 320 is mounted on the ~~lower column member 15~~ upper bracket 240, and the fixed gear 31 is mounted on the ~~upper column member 140~~ main body 23. This manifests that the positions of the fixed gear 31 and the movable gear 320 do not necessarily affect the operation of the tilt steering apparatus itself.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12 at line 23 and ending on page 13, line 10, as follows:

First, as a tilt lock mechanism for tilt locking an upper column member to a lower column member is constructed of a fixed gear mounted on the lower column member, a pivotably movable gear mounted on the upper column member, a female screw attached to the upper column member, a feed screw bar ~~locked to~~ engaged with the female screw for ~~teeth~~ locking the movable gear to the fixed gear by pressing the movable gear, and an operating member for rotating the feed screw bar, it is possible to convert the rotational motion to the rectilinear motion, whereby the operability of the tilt lever can be improved despite any possible change in operational load or overload on the tilt lever when the tilt is released. Also, since the tilt lock and lock release are done by the feed screw bar's consecutive motions, the noise generated from the operation can be suppressed as much

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as possible. Although it is possible that the screw thread of the feed screw bar 330 is worn out, the movable gear 320 can be pushed up fully and completely.